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2 Russians Plead Guilty in Spy Case

Wife Faces 18-Year Term, Husband 8 Years in Plot to Recruit FBI Agent

By WILLIAM OVEREND, Times Staff Writer

Accused Soviet spies Svetlana and Nikolai Ogorodnikov pleaded guilty to conspiracy to commit espionage Wednesday in Los Angeles federal court in a plea-bargain arrangement negotiated in the last two days with federal prosecutors.

Under the agreement, approved by U.S. District Judge David V. Kenyon, Ogorodnikov was immediately sentenced to eight years in prison. His wife is to be sentenced July 15 to an 18-year prison term.

The guilty pleas came two months after the beginning of the Ogorodnikov spy trial, in which the two Russian emigres were accused of working as utility agents for the Soviet KGB in a plot to recruit former FBI agent Richard W. Miller as a Soviet spy.

Defense lawyers, citing a gag order issued by the judge barring any comment on the case, refused to discuss the change of heart by their clients, who had steadfastly maintained their innocence since their arrests Oct. 2.

Faced Life Terms

The Ogorodnikovs, if convicted of the charges they faced, could have been sentenced to life in prison. As part of the plea bargain, bribery charges against both were dropped.

In the sudden and dramatic conclusion of the trial, Ogorodnikova wept and her husband delivered an angry hourlong tirade against the U.S. government and the FBI before his sentencing.

Referring to Ogorodnikova's sexual relationship with Miller, who will face his own espionage trial later this summer, Ogorodnikov exploded in rage:

"They raped my wife. They took my wife and turned her into a

prostitute. I just said everything to help her. She is the reason I am here."

The Ogorodnikovs, who immigrated to the United States from the Soviet Union in 1973 and lived in Hollywood, were arrested with Miller on Oct. 2 after a massive monthlong FBI counterintelligence operation code-named Whipworm.

Miller, who had been the government's main witness against them during the last two weeks of the trial, met Ogorodnikova on May 24, 1984, and testified that he began a sexual relationship with her a few days later.

Secret Documents

The government claims that the former counterintelligence agent passed secret FBI documents to the Ogorodnikovs later in the relationship in exchange for Ogorodnikova's sexual favors and the promise of \$65,000 in gold and cash.

Miller's lawyers, Stanley Greenberg and Joel Levine, declined comment Wednesday on the effect of the guilty pleas on their client's case, saying only that they look forward to Miller's trial being moved up from its present scheduled start Aug. 6. Miller was not in the courtroom Wednesday.

A fourth alleged conspirator in the scheme to obtain FBI documents is Alexandr Grishin, a vice consul of the Soviet Consulate in San Francisco, who was not prosecuted because of diplomatic immunity.

The Times learned that Grishin, who had remained at the San Francisco consulate since the October arrests, left the United States Sunday to begin what was described as a vacation in Moscow. Officials in Washington said they do not know whether he will

return.

While plea bargaining had begun earlier,

Ogorodnikovs, the first indication that they had reached a critical point came Tuesday, as Miller was preparing to take the stand for another day of testimony.

Announcing that the lawyers needed to resolve something of importance that "only recently developed," Kenyon sent jurors home for the day and later met for more than an hour in his chambers with government and defense lawyers.

At the end of Tuesday's secret session, Ogorodnikova emerged in tears and exchanged angry words with her husband. The Times subsequently learned that Ogorodnikova had agreed to a plea-bargain arrangement but that her husband had objected to it.

Insisted on Both

The government's position, sources said, was that it would not accept a plea bargain from just one of the defendants.

In court Wednesday morning, Ogorodnikov still showed signs of resisting the agreement worked out by his attorney, federal public defender Randy Sue Pollock, and defense lawyers for Ogorodnikova.

A 10 a.m. hearing was delayed for two hours as Pollock consulted with Brad Brian and Gregory Stone, the two defense lawyers representing Ogorodnikova, as well as government prosecutors Bruce G. Merritt and Richard B. Kendall.

By noon, however, final arrangements were complete. After 27 days of testimony in the spy case, Kendall stood to inform Kenyon officially that the plea-bargain talks had successfully concluded.

"The parties have agreed on a disposition of the case," Kendall said. "It will be by guilty pleas by both defendants. It is the government's view that justice will be done."

Announcing his acceptance of the sentencing arrangement, Kenyon said it appeared that both sides had given "considerable thought to the matter and feel it is in the interests of the public and of justice."

At Kendall's request, the judge then began questioning Ogorodnikov to make sure that he understood his guilty plea and to determine that, in fact, the 52-year-old